

*from the Author
to B. Harenc*

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ARGUMENT

IN SUPPORT OF THE

RIGHT OF THE POOR

IN THE

Kingdom of *IRELAND*,

T O A

NATIONAL PROVISION;

In the APPENDIX to which,

An ATTEMPT is made to settle a MEASURE
of the CONTRIBUTION due from Each
MAN to the POOR, on the FOOTING
of *Justice*.

By RICHARD WOODWARD, L. L. D.
Dean of *Clogher*.

————— *Oh! I have ta'en
Too little Care of this. Take Physick, Pomp,
Expose thyself to feel what Wretches feel,
That thou may'st shake the Superflux to them,
And shew the Heavens more Just.*

SHAKESPEARE'S LEAR.

D U B L I N:

Printed by and for S. POWELL, in *Dame-street*,
opposite to *Fownes's-street*, MDCCCLXVIII.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THOMAS CONOLLY

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the proposed publication of a new edition of the works of the late Thomas Conolly, Esq. of the County of Wick. I have the pleasure to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. M.



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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THOMAS CONOLLY.

S I R,

IF I were to address You in the ordinary Style of Dedications, I am convinced I should totally forfeit that Share, which I flatter myself I possess at present, of Your Esteem. It is as offensive to an ingenuous Mind to receive, as to pay the Adulation too often lavished on such Occasions, beyond the Bounds of Delicacy, or even Decency: Encomiums too extravagant to gain the Confidence of the World; too indiscriminate to reflect any Honour, even on a deserving Object; and of Course, derogatory from the Integrity, if not the Genius, of their Author. For there is a Dignity in real Esteem and Friendship,

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which

DEDICATION.

which disdains the very Garb of a Parasite. However highly I prize Your real Worth, from a thorough Knowledge of it, I am satisfied to leave Your general Character to be estimated by the particular Regard and Affection born to You by all Ranks of Men; and shall content myself with giving the Reasons which induced me to dedicate to You, this little Production of my leisure Hours.

THE Subject would naturally have turned the Attention of any Writer to You, who distinguished Yourself by so laudable a Solitude, during the last Session of Parliament, to bring in Heads of a Bill, for the Relief of the Poor: the Burthen of which, if it lay on landed Property, no Individual in this Kingdom would have supported in a larger Proportion than Yourself. But in Addition to this *common* Motive, I could not let slip
so

DEDICATION.

so publick an Opportunity of expressing my private Obligations to You, for Your Protection, as a Patron; and even beyond that, for the Confidence and Intimacy with which You have so long honoured me, as a Friend. It is owing solely to Your Recommendation, that I am placed in this Kingdom, and I am persuaded that You will ever regard it as the best Return I can make to Yourself, to devote to the Benefit of Your poor Countrymen, the little Services in the Power of,

Dear Sir,

Your Most Obligated,

And Faithful

Humble Servant,

RICHARD WOODWARD.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

R E A D E R.

THE Object of this Pamphlet is to place in their true Light, the Wants and the Rights of the Poor in this Kingdom. For this Purpose, the Author hath confined himself to one Train of Reasoning, which appears to him absolutely conclusive: without deviating into Variety of Proof, which might distract the Attention; or into any Kind of Ornament, which (by engaging the Imagination or Passions) might seduce, or be suspected of seducing the Judgment. As it is his Ambition, for the Sake of those whose Cause he is pleading, to draw the Attention of Persons qualified by their Station and Talents to carry these Speculations into Execution, who seldom have Leisure or Relish for
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Advertisement to the Reader.

minute and tedious Deductions; he hath limited himself to general Reasonings, and to the utmost Brevity compatible with Clearness. From the Candour of such Readers he flatters himself, that if any of his Opinions have the Air of Novelty, they will at least weigh before they reject: if the Freedom of any of his Sentiments should alarm, as tending to excite the Murmurs of the Poor, that they will reflect whether he hath not at the same Time inculcated the Reasonableness of their Subordination in Society, and their Obligations to Obedience, and whether he was not obliged to be thus explicit in stating their Rights by the Conduct of the Rich: if any Expression found harsh or invidious, that they will consider, whether it could have been softened without betraying the Truth: if it appear assuming in a private Man, to point out the Duties of the Legislature of a great King-

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Kingdom, that they will condescend to examine, (before they condemn him) whether the Duty be not proved as well as suggested, and whether it be not important enough to justify, and in some Sort to require, that Presumption. At all Events, whatever Judgment may be formed of the Execution, the Design of this little Piece needs no Apology. No sinister or interested View can be imputed to its Author. Little is to be gained by maintaining the Rights of the Poor, against the Prejudices and supposed Interest of the Rich, but the Consciousness of a benevolent Intention, and the heart-felt Satisfaction of endeavouring to be a Friend to the Friendless.

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Advertisement to the Reader

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to examine (before they condemn him)
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ARGUMENT

*In Support of the Right of the * Poor in this Kingdom to a NATIONAL PROVISION.*

INTRODUCTION.

THE want of a competent Provision for our Poor must have been ever regretted by the Considerate, from Motives of Policy as well as Compassion. But such is the Deference paid even to Error long established, that few of those who discern this Imperfection in our Police, would dare to hazard a Sentiment so new and alarming; regarded by almost all as a dangerous Paradox, or at best a visionary and impracticable Truth. So general a Discouragement

* To prevent Mistake, it is premised, that throughout this Argument by the Term *Poor*, are meant not those idle Vagrants who are a Pest to Society, but those only, who though willing to work, cannot subsist by Labour; and in the Term *Rich*, are comprehended all who have more than enough to supply them with the mere necessities of Life. See the Appendix.

makes most of them give up the Cause as desperate. It requires perhaps a more *uncommon* Fortitude of Mind to contend with Civil than with Military Difficulties, to oppose the Prejudices, than to face the Enemies of one's Country : And yet in both Cases it is equally the Duty of a good Citizen, to stem the Torrent with Resolution, and even in Circumstances the most discouraging, *non desperare de Republicâ*. Indeed where both Duty and Expediency can be plainly proved ; in such a Case to despair of the Wisdom and Virtue of the Publick, is certainly in some degree to derogate from our own. For we should reflect, that the steady light of Truth will (by sure, however slow, degrees) break through the Mist of Ignorance and Prejudice ; and that whatsoever is consonant to the Maxims of Reason, as well as the Feelings of Humanity, (being Proof against Cavil, and superior to Ridicule) can never be hopeless ; especially in a free and enlightened Country. Of this, the course of the last Parliament Winter gave abundant Proof, when the *Sketch* of † a Plan for a National Provision for the Poor

† Drawn up hastily by the Author, and submitted to a Committee of the Society, who were pleased to approve and adopt it ; and for which he had the Honour, much above the Merit of the Performance, of a Gold Medal.

(an Idea heretofore so generally exploded) was honoured with the Approbation of the DUBLIN SOCIETY, and a laudable Beginning of a publick Establishment for the Sick was made by the Wisdom of the Legislature. At the same Time, the Zeal of many Gentlemen of distinguished Rank and Character to extend the National Bounty to the aged and infant Poor, though prevented from taking effect by the close of the Session, gave a further Presage of the Practicableness of any Scheme recommended by its Propriety and Benevolence to the Parliament of *Ireland*. From these favourable Appearances, the Author is encouraged to lay before the Publick his Thoughts on the Expediency of such an Establishment, which he is convinced (after much Consideration) is as nearly capable of Demonstration, as any moral or political Question whatever. How far he may do Justice to so good a Cause, he submits with becoming Deference to the publick Judgment; and, in order to give the Merits of the Question a fair Trial, will confine himself to a Method strictly argumentative, resting his Plea in favour of the Poor on the Proof of these Three Positions:

THAT the Poor are so inadequately provided for by *Voluntary* Contributions in this Kingdom,

Kingdom, as to stand in *need* of some *Legal* Title to a Maintenance.

THAT it is the *indispensable* Duty of the Rich to grant them a competent Provision ; And

THAT it is eminently for the *Interest* of the *Commonwealth* that this Duty be discharged in an ample and effectual Manner.

IF these Three Points admit of a clear Proof, and there remain no Doubt of the Necessity, the moral Obligation, or the political Expediency of providing a public Support for the Poor ; there is a reasonable ground of Hope, that such narrow and forbid Prejudices as will not yield to the Voice of Reason, or the united Affections of Compassion and publick Love, may be controlled by the Wisdom and Authority of Law.

P O S I.

POSITION I.

That the Poor are so inadequately provided for by Voluntary Contributions in this Kingdom, as to stand in need of some Legal Title to a Maintenance.

THAT the lower Class of our People are very ill accommodated with Lodging, Rayment, and even Food, is but too manifest to all who are acquainted with their manner of Living. That their Poverty is likely to continue, with but little Mitigation, will be as evident to any intelligent Man, who reflects on the following, amongst other, Causes of it : The exorbitant Rent extorted from the poorer Tenants, ever loth and afraid to quit their antient Habitations, by the general Method of setting Farms to the highest Bidder without any Allowance for a Tenant-Right ; the System, as prejudicial to the Landlord as to the Under-tenant, of letting large Tracts of Land to Undertakers inured to Tyranny and Extortion ; the Oppression of Duty-Work, which calls the Cottager arbitrarily from the Tillage of the little Spot which he holds at
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so dear a Rent ; and the low Rate of Wages for Labour. These Circumstances, combined with some others, reduce the *Irish* Cottager below the Peasant of almost every Country in Europe. Such is his hard Condition in the most plentiful Season, and in the prime of his Health and Strength : What then must be his State in time of Dearth, under the Pressure of Years, Infirmities, or even a very numerous young Family ? His Expenses admit of no Retrenchment. He is a Stranger to Luxury, or even to decent Accommodation, and yet his Wages seldom afford any Reserve. On the Death of such a Father of a Family, dependent on his Labour for their main, or perhaps entire Support, how forlorn must be the Situation of his Widow and Orphan Children ! It would shock a tender Mind to imagine (if Imagination could paint) the Miseries, to which the Bulk of the Inhabitants of this Kingdom are constantly exposed by the slightest Reverse of Fortune : By a single bad Season, by an accidental Loss, by an occasional Disease, and even by the gradual Decay of Nature. Nor are these affecting Scenes confined to Seasons of Scarcity ; they must always exist in a great, though not equal, Number. They present themselves but too often to every country Gentleman, (and still more to the Clergy, in the Exercise of
their

their parochial Duties, to whose Experience we appeal) to need a Proof. They cannot be doubted or denied by any, but those who shut their Eyes or steel their Hearts against them.

So numerous, so urgent, and so well known are the Distresses of the Poor: Let us now fairly estimate the Sufficiency of the Resources, at present subsisting for their Relief. Our Eyes will be naturally turned *first* to the Landed Gentlemen, who derive their Wealth and Importance from the Labour of these Men. Of these, many, perhaps a Majority, of the most Considerable, constantly reside in another Kingdom; and though some of them may cast back a Part of their Superfluity on those to whose Industry they owe their *All*, yet it is to be feared, that such Instances are comparatively very rare. On the contrary, it is too frequently urged as a Recommendation of *Irish* Property, that it is not *encumbered with any Tax for the Maintenance of the Poor*. A singular instance this of the Inadvertence (one would only hope of the Inadvertence, lest we should be forced to impute it to the Depravity) of Mankind, that such a Phrase could be rendered so familiar to the Ear of any wise and good Man, as to lose its genuine Horror! If the Sentiment were developed, surely few would entertain,

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and still fewer avow it : And therefore, no ingenuous Reader will think it either invidious or unnecessary in this interesting Argument to lay open its plain Import, which is this, “ An Estate in this Kingdom is represented to be peculiarly advantageous to the Landlord, because, though he may, and generally does avail himself of the utmost Profit that can be drawn from the Labour of his Tenant,” (leaving him in Truth too scanty a *present* Maintenance,) “ he is nevertheless at Liberty to abandon that Labourer to perish, when he is unable to work any longer.” Is this boasted Privilege either Honourable or Desirable? A wise Man would not glory in such an Exemption, a good Man would not claim it, and he who wishes to enjoy, doth not deserve it.

BUT it will be replied, that notwithstanding the Absence of many great Proprietors of Land in *Ireland*, there is yet a large Number of Persons of distinguished Property, and a still greater of respectable Gentry, who reside on their Estates, (a part of the Year at least) administering Employment to the Industrious, and Charity to the Distressed. Granted! There are many such valuable Characters amongst us, who are an Ornament and Blessing to their Country. To such, every Mark of publick Regard is due,

due. We pay Homage to their Virtues with Alacrity, we perceive and unveil their Imperfections with Regret. But it is the Duty of an Advocate for the Poor to ask even *them*, whether their Bounty be not confined too much, if not entirely, to the Neighbourhood of their own Residence. Does their Liberality extend equally to their distant Estates? How few can truly say, that they ever have it in their Contemplation, what may be the Condition of their lower Tenants on Lands remote from their own Mansions! Yet those Tenants are unquestionably of equal Service to them and the Publick, equally entitled to their Attention, and the more likely to stand in need of their Charity, because from those Estates they are *Absentees*, almost as fatally as if they resided in another Kingdom. On the whole it cannot be denied, that by far the greater Part of our Lands do not enjoy the Benefit of the Proprietor's Residence, and in general the Poor of those Estates partake not of his Charity. Now when we have weighed, on one Side, the extraordinary Indigence of the whole Peasantry; and allowed, on the other, for the Number of Absentees from the Kingdom, the Remoteness of many Estates from the Mansions of the resident Gentry, (which together render it no uncommon Case to find a Tract of Country containing some Scores of square

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Miles without one Family of Note) it will be intuitively clear, that there can be no Balance, nor indeed any the least Proportion, between the Necessities of the poor Tenants, and the Alms of their Landlords.

To compensate for this Inequality, let no one lay the smallest Stress on the Collections in the Places of divine Worship. For however considerable they may be in some particular Churches fortunately circumstanced, the Average of them through the Kingdom is too trivial to be worth mentioning. In a Word, however harsh or unpalatable it may be, it is but too notorious a Truth, that the Poor in the Country draw little of their Support from the Gentry; the vagrant Beggar excepted, who is generally a Disgrace to the Name, and an Injury to the Cause of Charity. They depend principally upon the neighbouring Farmer, or even Cottager, the Poorest of whom are humane enough to communicate with them, and thereby lessen, their little Stock. Can there be a Spectacle more edifying, and at the same time more reproachful to an affluent Landlord, than to see (and it is his own Neglect if he does not see or know it) one of his poor Tenants feeding another, with Bread taken as it were out of the Mouth of his own Children; whilst he who is Feasting on the Labour of both, attends

to the Miseries of neither : but throws the whole Burthen of relieving them on those, whom no reasonable By-stander could think equal to bear the smallest Part of it. But to return to the Argument, (if this Observation be thought a Digression) what can such Wretches give ? What can they who are themselves so ill defended from Cold and Hunger, be supposed to spare to another for Food, much less for Cloathing ? As to Education for the Infant, or Medicine for the sick Poor, such Relief seemed to have been never thought of, till the latter were considered in a late Act for County Infirmaries, which does Honour to the Legislature. Yet honourable as this Beginning of Good is to our Governors, it can be regarded only as a Sample of what they approve, a kind of Earnest of Public Benevolence. For it is clear at first Sight, that the Income of those Infirmaries is in no Degree adequate to the Number of sick Poor in a whole County ; the Orphan, the Aged, and a vast Majority of the Sick, (who from Distance of Situation, or the Extremity of their Cases, cannot be removed, or from the Contagiousness of their Distempers, or want of Room, cannot be admitted to the County Hospital) are still without Relief ; and therefore no more is necessary to place out of the Reach of Cavil the first Position :

“ That

“ That the Poor are so inadequately pro-
 “ vided for by *Voluntary Contributions* in
 “ this Kingdom, as to stand in *need* of some
 “ *Legal Title to a Maintenance.*”

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POSITION II.

That it is the indispensable Duty of the Rich to provide a competent Maintenance for the Poor.

IT hath been so usual for the Advocates for the Poor, to content themselves with exciting the *Compassion* of the Rich, that it will probably appear to many a Paradox to assert, that they have a clear Title to a Subsistence from them on the Footing of *strict Justice*. Yet the Reasonableness of this Claim may be made so plain to any Man accustomed to consider the Origin of Society, and the Foundation of Property, (and for such Readers this Argument is principally intended) as to supersede the Necessity of any other Plea for a publick Provision for them. Nor would we so far wrong their just Pretensions, as to represent that Aid, which is really a Debt, as an Act of Bounty to be granted or withheld at Pleasure; or even (in the Language of some Writers on the Law of Nature) as a Duty of *imperfect* Obligation. We make our Demand *absolutely*, and support it on the following Principles.

EVERY

EVERY Friend to the common Rights of Mankind will readily admit, that no political System can be wisely and equitably constructed, without giving such Attention to the Welfare of every Class of its Members, as will render their Situation in that Society preferable to what is called (in popular, though somewhat unphilosophical, Language) a State of Nature. Now as every Citizen (who hath not forfeited his Right by civil Guilt) hath this Claim on the Community to which he belongs, some Writers on Natural Law have had Recourse to the Idea of a certain Compact, as the Origin of Government; which, though it never fully took Place, serveth well to illustrate the Right inherent in every Man to Subsistence and Protection, in Return for his Services to the Publick, and Submission to its Laws. The Idea is founded in Equity: For every Civil Constitution should be so framed, that each Member of it could have been supposed to have acceded to it voluntarily, with a rational Attention to his own Happiness. On this Supposition, as on a Contract implied, is built the reciprocal Obligation to protect and obey, and on the Neglect of his relative Duty by either Party, is built

built the Right of the * Sovereign to take away the Property or Life of the Subject, and the Right of the Subject to resist and annul the Power of the Sovereign. But that this Compact is to be regarded only as a kind of Fiction, taken up to convey an Idea of Rights, is evident from this known Fact; that every Man finds himself a Subject of some State, without a Power of emancipating himself from its Jurisdiction, though he hath not at any Time assented thereto, or agreed to exchange the Liberties of a State of Nature for the Privileges of a Member of that Community. And this Arrangement of Providence conduceth to the Happiness of Man, though it seemeth an Infraction of his Liberty; for otherwise every Infant must be unprotected, and every Man remain an Outlaw, 'till he had made an Option of his Country, and taken out his Charter as a Citizen.

THUS, however flattering to the Love of Liberty the Idea of an original Compact may be, and however useful to ascertain the Rights and Duties of Magistrate and Subject, yet in Reality every Man is adopted by Compulsion into the Society of which his Parents were Citizens, entitled only to that

* The Term *Sovereign* is here to be taken in its utmost Latitude, as signifying the *Ruling Power* in every State, whether lodged in the Hands of one, few, or many.

Portion of the publick Wealth which accrues to him by Inheritance, and precluded from all Right of Occupancy over any other. If then his Parents were so poor, as to transmit no Patrimony to him, he is born the Inhabitant of a Land, every Spot of which is appropriated to some other Person; he cannot seize any Animal or Vegetable for his Food, without invading Property, and incurring the Penalty of Law. The same Law too forbids him to become an effective Member of any other Society. He cannot emigrate without the Permission of the Government, so as to * *expatriate* himself, or serve in Arms for his adopted against his native Country, without forfeiting his Life, as a Rebel. Nor is all this any Impeachment of the Equity of the State, for without it the Purposes of Society could not be answered. Without exclusive Property, there could be no regular Industry; without Subordination there could be no Government or Order; and without a Power of commanding the Persons and Services of its Subjects, the State might nourish Drones or Vipers in its Bosom. Besides, the meanest

* Tho' there should be found any Instance of a State so particularly constructed, as to permit its Subjects to renounce their Allegiance at Pleasure, which yet the Author from the whole of his Enquiries believes not to be the Case in Europe at least, it is still perfectly sufficient for the Purpose of this Argument, that the Constitution of these Kingdoms allows no such Liberty.

Subject

Subject hath hitherto no Grievance, for he is in a State as good as the Nature of Society will admit, and far preferable to that of any lonely Savage. His Person is protected from Violence, and though he hath no stable Possession, his Industry is free. His Labour will be useful to some rich Neighbour, and produce to him in Return, a more comfortable Subsistence, than falls to the Share of the solitary Lord over a Desert. So far he is more safe and happy, than he could have been out of Society.

BUT one of these inferior Citizens, excluded from any Source of Support but Labour, becomes by Sicknes, or otherwise incapable of earning a Subsistence. This is the Case in Question (which is proved in the former Section to be but too common in this Kingdom) and the Enquiry is, whether his rich Neighbours are, or are not bound in *Justice*, to provide for him a competent Maintenance? If not, by what Right did they take upon them to enact certain Laws, (for the Rich compose the Legislative Body in every civilized Country) which compelled that Man to become a Member of their Society; which precluded him from any Share in the Land where he was born, any Use of its spontaneous Fruits, or any Dominion over the Beasts of the Field, on Pain of Stripes, Imprisonment, or Death? How can

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they justify their exclusive Property, in the *common Heritage* of Mankind, unless they consent in return to provide for the Subsistence of the Poor, who were excluded from those common Rights by the Laws of the Rich, to which they were never Parties? For the * Chimera of virtual Representation in the Legislative Body hath no Place *here*, nor can the Civilian find *here* any Traces of an original Compact entered into by the lower Class of People, where *the World is evidently not their Friend, nor the World's Law*. It would be a Waste of Words, and a Disgrace to Reasoning, to labour to prove a Point so clear as this: That the richer Members of Society, who are a Minority, have no Right to exclude the lower Class, who are a Majority, from any Portion in the publick Patrimony; without securing to them the Resource of a Subsistence, when they must otherwise be reduced to the dreadful Alternative

* That the Notion of virtual Representation is in Part Chimerical, will be evident to any Man, who considers the frequent Opposition of the Local Interests of Boroughs, &c. (which generally influence the Representative) to the Publick Good; and the Case of the Poor is perhaps the strongest Instance, that the whole Body of the People are not virtually represented, because the Interest of the Poor calls for a Tax on the Rich, and therefore is in direct Opposition to the supposed Interest of all the Representatives, and almost all who are concerned in electing them.

tive of breaking through those Regulations, or perishing by a dutiful Observance of them. And consequently, as the Welfare of the Commonwealth requireth Subordination and exclusive Property, that it becometh the *indispensable Duty* of the Rich, in whose Favour principally that Arrangement is made, to provide a competent Maintenance for the Poor who are excluded by it.

THE Argument might be closed here, were the Object of it merely to establish a speculative Conviction, that the Poor are entitled to a Support from the Rich, by the fundamental Principles of Equity; but as Speculation when opposed by Interest, hath little Chance of being reduced to Practice, it will be expedient to proceed to the Proof of the third Position; and shew that in this, as in every other Instance, (whatever shallow Pretenders may conceive to the contrary from their contracted Views of either) sound Policy is inseparably connected with Virtue and true Religion.

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POSITION III.

That it is eminently for the Interest of the Commonwealth that this Duty be discharged in an ample and effectual Manner.

AS it seems the primary Axiom with all judicious Statesmen, that publick Convenience, Power, and Wealth, arise from the Multitude of People usefully employed; if it can be evinced, that a discreet Management and Maintenance of the Poor will increase the Number and Industry of the People, this Proportion will be demonstrated: and there will be no Necessity of engaging in the various other Proofs of which it is capable.

LET us consider first, as it is first in its political Importance, the Case of the Infant Poor. It cannot long remain a Doubt with any Man of ordinary Discernment, whether an established Fund in every Parish, County, or other more commodious District, for the Support and Education of destitute Children, would not preserve the Lives of many; and form them all to be more useful Members of Society, than they could be if abandoned to acci-

accidental Alms, or trained to earn a precarious Subsistence by Begging. For the Children in Question must, in general, either remain in the Cabin of some compassionate poor Neighbour, (as hath been shewn in the first Section) who at most can only spare to them what is barely necessary to support Life, without a Thought of any regular Instruction; or else they must be led about the Country by some strolling Beggar, in Order to extort Alms by their infant Cries; in which Case Ignorance and Idleness would be the smallest Evils in their Education. Now on either Supposition, can there be the same Probability of their being *reared*, without any regular Supply of wholesome and nourishing Food, and without a Possibility of medical Assistance in Sickness? Or can they be as well fitted for the Services of Society, without any, or with a vicious Education, as if they were, by the Aid of some well conducted Charity, principled in Virtue, disciplined and inured to Industry? We might appeal to the Publick Opinion, fully expressed on this Question, in the popular Contributions to Charity Schools in the Capital: We might appeal to the Apprehensions of the Legislature of the bad Consequences likely to arise from breeding up Children in the Trade of Begging, which induced them to grant a Power to certain Magistrates to take away Children from any strolling Beggar,
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and send them to the next Charter School: But that it would be an Affront to the common Sense of any Reader, to multiply Arguments or Authorities to prove, that a regular Maintenance and Education of destitute Children would secure more Lives and Service to the State, than a total Neglect of them. But one Circumstance more is worth Notice, though a little beside the present Argument, yet not foreign to the general Scope of it; that a proper Establishment for the Children of the Poor, a vast Majority of whom are Papists, would perfect the Scheme of the INCORPORATED CHARTER SCHOOL SOCIETY, (which is very justly the favourite Object of Government) by distributing Protestant Working Schools throughout the Kingdom.

· NEXT to the Infant, the Sick Poor claim our Consideration, on the Principles of political Arithmetick, because the Publick is deeply interested in their speedy Restoration to Health and Strength. And here it would be difficult to find a Medium of Proof clearer than the very Point in Question: That a ready Care and Cure of the Diseases of the labouring Class of Mankind, will save Lives, shorten the Intermissions of Labour by Sickness, and of Course increase considerably the Aggregate of their Industry. Not to mention the Preservation of Health and Lives in general, by the Improvement of the Art of Me-

Medicine, from Publick Hospitals. But as an Establishment for the Sick hath received, though not an adequate Support, yet a Sanction from the Legislature; we will pass on to the

THIRD Class of the Poor, and examine how far the same publick Expediency may take Place, in Favour of the Aged. Now even though we should be so ungrateful as to forget the Merit of these worn out Servants of the Publick, the Expence of relieving them will be in a great Degree, if not fully repaid, by lengthening their Lives, of Course protracting the Period of their Service, and preserving entire the little Industry of which they are still capable. For suppose that the aged Labourer be able to earn one Half of his Maintenance, if a charitable Fund be at Hand to supply the other Moiety, he will stay in his Cottage, and employ his remaining Strength in Industry, instead of devoting his *whole Time*, as he must at present, to the precarious and pernicious Employment of Begging. Two such Paupers would be the Addition of one effective Man to publick Industry. If at the Close of Life they become an absolute Burthen, in that *short* Intervall indeed we have only to plead their former Services, with this short Remark; that if the Interest of the Publick does not admit of relieving their Wants, it

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would be a still higher Degree of Oeconomy,
and even of Mercy, to adopt the *refined*
Indian Policy of putting an immediate End
to them.

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CONCLUSION.

IF these three Propositions be clearly established, and there remain no Doubt but that the Poor of this Kingdom stand in *need* of a publick Provision ; that the Rich are bound in *Justice* (though they neglect) to give it ; and that the *publick Interest* requires, that it should be given amply and effectually : From these Premises necessarily flow the following Conclusions.

FIRST, that the *Interest* of the State demands some *compulsory* Law, that the Rich may provide a competent Subsistence for the Poor.

SECONDLY, that it is the *Duty* of the Legislature, (for Legislatures have their moral Characters and Duties as well as private Men) to make such an Arrangement, as will secure the just Rights of the lower, who are not the least useful, Class of their Subjects ; and at the same Time promote the general Weal, by increasing the Number and Industry of the People.

Some OBJECTIONS considered.

AS the Rights of the Poor, and the consequent Duty of the Legislature, are thus firmly fixed on the Basis of Policy as well as Equity; it would be superfluous to add more, but that in a Case where Custom and private Interest concur in raising Prejudices, every opening to Cavil should be guarded: and therefore the Author thinks it advisable to obviate those Objections which have come to his Knowledge, when a Plan of this Kind engaged the Conversation of the Publick during the Course of the last Session of Parliament. On that Occasion he had the Satisfaction of observing, that the Distresses of the Poor were universally confessed and regretted, and did not meet with any Speculator in Morality who would not, on Reflection, admit the indispensable Duty of the Rich to relieve them. So that his two first Positions seemed to stand unimpeached, and the whole Weight of Opposition to be levelled at the political Expediency of a *compulsory* Law, to constrain the Rich to discharge that Duty. And this was branched out into two different Objections: First, that a Legal Establishment for the Poor is a Temptation to Idleness and Expence amongst the labouring Class of Mankind, and therefore

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inexpedient: Secondly, that though in some Respects expedient, it would be attended with an *Expence* more than equivalent to that Expediency. These two Objections shall be considered separately; which yet the candid Reader will allow to be a further Indulgence to Prejudice, because a Demonstration of the Wants of the Poor, and the absolute Duty of the Rich to relieve them, in Reason precludeth both Individuals, and the Legislature from pleading Political Expediency. For what is that Plea but a formal Attempt to prove, that it is expedient for Government to acquiesce in the Oppression of one Division of its Subjects, in Order to secure to another an Exemption to which it hath no Right? An Absurdity in Politicks, as well as Morals, that neither needs, nor deserves Confutation! However, as we fear not to join Issue on the footing of general Utility, we will proceed to examine these Objections.

OBJECTION I.

That a legal Establishment for the Poor is a Temptation to Idleness and Expence amongst the labouring Class of Men, and therefore inexpedient.

THIS Objection is grounded on a Supposition, that a Labourer will be less industrious and saving, if he be secure of a Supply in Time of Need: and thence is inferred the Inexpediency of establishing a Fund for the Maintenance of *any* Poor. Now though we should admit the Supposition, which we shall hereafter prove to be at best very doubtful, the Inference will by no Means follow. For in the first Section it was shewn, that the Income of the lower Rank of People is so scanty, that they seldom have it in their Power to lay up a Reserve sufficient for *their own* Sicknes, or old Age; much less for their Orphan Children. Although therefore it be admitted, that some Paupers may owe their Distress to their own or their Parents Improvidence; yet there must be many more, amongst a Peasantry so ill appointed, who are Objects of Charity, in spite of the most slavish Toil and the most rigorous Parsimony.

BUT

BUT to take this Argument in its strongest Bearing, and confine ourselves to the Case of an idle prodigal Man, who in the extremity of Age or Sickneſs cries out for Food or Medicine; can any one avow, that we ſhould ſuppreſs every tender Feeling, ſtop our Hand when by the Inſtinct of Compaſſion it is ſtretching forth Relief to him, and with a ſtoical Indifference ſuffer him to periſh; from a deep and doubtful Speculation whether ſuch Relief may not encourage Idleneſs, and become, in the End, a political Evil? And if we may, *without Injury to the State*, (and muſt if we expect Mercy) relieve the Diſtreſs, though we blame the Cauſe; wherein conſiſts the Inexpediency of obliging thoſe of the Rich, who are too diſtant or diſſipated to know, or too callous to regard the Miſery of the Poor, to contribute to its Relief, and not throw the whole Burthen (as at preſent) on the Reſident, the Conſiderate, and the Benevolent? For a Legal Proviſion hath this double Advantage above Voluntary Alms, that it is at once moſt equitable to thoſe who pay, and moſt equal and effectual to thoſe who receive.

Now if no Reasoning can juſtify ſuch Obduracy, as would permit a Wretch to languish without help in his Age, or Sickneſs, becauſe he had not made a provident Uſe of
his

his Health and Strength ; on what Principle, shall we conclude from the Imprudence of the Parent, against all Compassion to his Orphan Children ? On what Pretext, shall we exclude from the publick Care the Distresses of the Laborious and Frugal, which were owing neither to their own, nor their Parents political Sins ; but took their rise from high Rents, and low Wages, from the Scarcity of Bread, or the Check of a Manufacture, from the sudden Increase of Family, or the Death of Cattle, from Disease unassisted by Medicine, and in consequence perhaps of the same want of Help, the untimely Loss of an industrious Father ?

THUS it is clear, that the Inference is by far too wide to rest on the Premises ; and that it would be neither just nor expedient to refuse Relief to the unavoidable Distress of a great Number of innocent and meritorious Persons ; because, by a certainty of Relief, a few others might be tempted to Laziness and Extravagance. But after all is this Apprehension itself well founded ? The Objector must be little attentive to the ordinary Conduct of the lower Class of Mankind ; if he conceives that they are idle and profuse on a regular System, and not rather from the want of any. He must be little acquainted with the State of Europe, or he would have observed that the whole Current of Fact bears against his Theory,

ory, and that in those Countries where the Poor have the most ample and sure Provision, (as in *England*, † *Holland*, and the Canton of *Berne*) where, if this Supposition was well founded, there would be a general Idleness; there is, on the contrary, the most universal Spirit of Industry. He is further required to prove, that this *supposed* Diminution of Industry from a *Security* of Relief, will overbalance the *certain* Deductions from Labour, proved above to arise from the *Want* of it; as loss of Lives, of Time by Sickness, of Education for the Young, and of all Disposition and even Leisure for Industry by the Trade of Begging, now the necessary Occupation of such Numbers. He is called on first to institute this Balance, and demonstrate that it must turn in favour of his Supposition; or he can with a very bad Grace advance a vague Surmise, founded on no Calculation, unsupported by Experience of human Nature, contradicted by the Practice of the most commercial Nations, repugnant to the Instinct of Humanity, the Maxims of Justice, and eve-

† In *Holland*, (according to the Informations which the Author received in that Country) when the Contributions in the Places of divine Worship, and the Collections made three or four Times in the Year from House to House, are inadequate to the Relief of the Poor; the Deacons, whose Province it is to distribute these Alms, must apply to the Magistrate, who is to take such Measures, as to him shall seem most expedient and effectual to supply the Deficiency. In the Canton of *Berne* there is a parochial Provision for the Poor.

ry reasonable Presumption of Political Expediency. Indeed a well conducted Provision for the Poor, is so far from being calculated to encourage Idleness, that it tends to detect, and may be employed to punish and suppress it. It will naturally destroy all Pretence for Begging, * a Nuisance both troublesome and pernicious ; which however the severest Police can never restrain, until some publick Institution for genuine Distress shall have drawn a Line between Want and Imposture. A Law prohibiting Persons in Want to beg, is just as wise, humane and practicable, as a Law prohibiting Persons in Pain to groan. To the real Object, it is at once tyrannical and ineffective, to the Impostor it is equally nugatory, or rather a positive Encouragement. For the former having a right to ask Relief, (by a Law paramount to all others, that of Necessity) under that Right, which is before proved to be the Right of a great Number in this Kingdom, a far greater Number will ever securely screen a vagrant and idle Disposition.

* It will here perhaps be asked, are there no Beggars in those Countries where there is a National Provision for the Poor? Yes; and there always will be, so long as there are thoughtless rich People to encourage them. But a considerate Man will pass them by, because he knows, that if really Indigent, they are relieved, if Pretenders, they should be punished. In this Kingdom indeed, where the Poor have no National Provision, whoever resolves not to give to a common Beggar, must abandon to Destruction a great Number of *real* Objects, who have no Resource but Begging.

O B J E C -

O B J E C T I O N II.

That though a legal Establishment for the Poor be expedient in some Respects, it would be attended with an Expence more than equivalent to its Expediency.

NOW this very Objection is no slight Presumption, of the absolute Necessity of a poor Tax. It must be grounded on a Supposition, that the Poor stand in need of some further Relief, than what is at present afforded them. For, if voluntary Contributions are already sufficient, it vanishes of course; as no additional Burthen will be incurred, and the only Alteration will be in favour of the Benevolent, by a more equitable Partition of the present Expence. If more indeed be wanted, it hath already been proved, that both Justice and the publick Welfare require that it should be given. But whence is the Idea derived of so enormous an Expence? It hath not yet been tried in this Kingdom, and it surely is worth an Experiment; there being no Colour of Reason, that the Poor should continue to languish under such complicated Misery, because the Rich will not risk an imaginary Inconvenience. But these Apprehensions are fa-

voured by the Complaints of the *English* Gentry, on the Exorbitance of their poor Rates. To this, there are many Answers. First, it is well known that Complaints do not always imply a Grievance, especially where a Tax of any Kind is in Question; and whatever may be the Murmurs of the thoughtless, or unfeeling, the most virtuous and judicious Part of the *English* Nation have ever considered the Poor Laws, as an Honour to the Wisdom and Humanity of that trading Kingdom. They have indeed frequently meditated some Alterations in the Detail of those Laws, but that very Attention proves their Sense of the great Importance of their general Object: A Repeal of them having never been in Contemplation of those Personages, who have at different Times attempted to new model the Management of the Poor. Secondly, if the *English* Landholder pay more than the Necessities of the Poor require, it is his own Fault; he is intrusted by the Legislature to grant and to expend it, and is invested with Powers sufficient to prevent or punish Imposition: If he be too indolent to avail himself of those Powers, he may perhaps suffer, but he has no right to complain. Thirdly, if there be Imperfections and Abuses in that System, (which on the whole is contrived with so much Wisdom, that they who have considered it most maturely, are least sanguine in their Expectations of improving it) we are not limited to copy the Errors of our Neighbours, but may profit

profit by their Experience. Lastly, the Expence of maintaining the Poor in *England*, where the Labourer lives so much better, cannot with Reason be applied to any Calculations for this Kingdom; because the utmost a Pauper can expect, is such a kind of Maintenance, as may be earned by the meanest Labour. If, in opposition to this, it may be suggested, that the Poor are more numerous here; that indeed may augment the Expence, but would be a strange Plea against the Obligation or Propriety of relieving them. But admit a Poor-Tax to be a Grievance to the Rich, by retrenching their Superfluity; and place it fairly in the Balance with the Misery of the Poor, who, for want of that Regulation, are robbed of the Necessaries of Life; and the Inconvenience of the former will be found lighter than *Vanity itself*, from whence it arises. We are content to ground the whole Merits of our Cause on this Competition, exemplified in a Calculation not absolutely arbitrary. Suppose, on one Hand, that the Maintenance of the Poor would consume the twentieth Part of the Rents of the Rich; (which is by no means probable *) and suppose, on the other, (what is much more likely) that every † twentieth Family will occasionally need Assistance; is it not

* See the Appendix.

† This Proportion is founded on a careful Examination of a Parish containing upwards of 1600 Families.

far more reasonable, that every Man of Property should be curtailed of the twentieth Part of his Income by Law, than that one Person in twenty should be exposed to perish, because his Landlord resideth in *England*, or in some distant County in this Kingdom, or, though at Hand, is ignorant or regardless of his Distress.

AND now I can only foresee one other Species of Argument against the Utility of these Speculations, arising rather from the Obstructions to their Execution, than Objections against their Truth or Importance. They are too Good to be put in Practice ! says the desponding Man of Virtue. They are too Refined and Visionary ! cry the frivolous and corrupt ; who, without Warmth of Heart, or Power of Understanding, to conceive any thing for the Benefit of their Fellow Creatures, have the Presumption to measure all Mankind by their own imperfect Standard ; condemning as Utopian, every thing that is good ; as wild, every thing that is, or appears to them, new ; and as impracticable, every thing which they have not Abilities to carry into Execution. I should not have mentioned the latter Class, but to repress their petulant Triumph at the Simplicity of a Projector ; who, in Opposition to Custom and Prejudice, is hardy enough to plead the Cause of Justice, even in favour of the Rights of the Wretched : To let

let them know, that I was aware of their Censure, and appeal from their summary and unweighed Decision to the Tribunal of Common Sense and Virtue. The former, who, from an Anxiety for what is good, are apt to fear for its Success, must yet allow, that it is the Duty of a moral Writer, to delineate Virtue in her perfect Form ; though she should appear of too exalted a Beauty to catch the Eye of the Vulgar, and of too exact a Purity to captivate the Affections of the Corrupt. But why should they so far wrong the Virtues of their Country, as to allow any good Thing to be impracticable. The Legislative Body, after their Bounty in the last Session of Parliament, deserve a greater Confidence. Nor should the Individuals of a Kingdom, amiably distinguished for a liberal Hospitality to the Rich, be hastily suspected of invincible Parsimony and determined Injustice to the Poor.

THUS hath the Author compleated his Argument in Favour of a Poor Law, grounded (unless his Wish have in this Case laid an unperceived Bias on his Judgment) on unquestionable Facts, and fair Reasoning. In pursuing this delicate Subject, whilst he was pleading the Cause of the Poor, he wished not to offend the Rich ; whilst he was asserting their Rights as Men, he hath endeavoured to inculcate the Reasonableness of their Subordination, and their Obligations to
Obedience

Obedience, as Citizens ; and whilst he was exerting the Privilege of a free Country, to deliver his Sentiments on the Duties of the Legislature, he hath studied to preserve the Respect due to Government. He hath now discharged what he thought his Duty, and recommends the Cause he hath undertaken to the Mighty, to the only Effectual, Protection of that Being, *in whose Hand are the Hearts of Men, who delivereth the Poor that crieth, the Fatherless, and him who hath none to help him.*

A P P E N -

APPENDIX.

In which an Attempt is made, to establish a Measure of the Contribution due from each Individual to the Poor, on the footing of Justice.

WHEN the above Argument was finished, which was intended to lay before the Publick, the Duty incumbent on the Legislature to secure a Subsistence for the Indigent; it occurred to the Writer, that a Wish might arise in the Mind of some Individuals, to whom his Plea in Favour of the Poor, on the footing of Justice, appeared conclusive, to see some Measure established, by which each Man might calculate his Proportion of the common Debt; and satisfy his own Conscience by discharging it, until it should be ascertained, and exacted by legal Authority. Indeed, such a Standard is a Desideratum in Ethicks, as it is necessary in Order to fix the Boundary between Justice and Charity in our Contributions to the Poor. At present, every Contribution is called Alms, and considered as an Act of Bounty. But if the Poor have a Claim on every rich Man founded in Justice, that

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Demand must be fully satisfied, before his Offerings can deserve the Title of Mercy, or Liberality. So far, he is required not so properly to give, as to pay; and if he refuse, is not only unkind, but unjust. As the intelligent Reader must be sensible of the Difficulty, as well as Utility, of forming such a common Measure, as will serve Cases infinitely varied; he will regard the Attempt with an Eye of Indulgence, and candidly allow for Inaccuracy or Error.

If then the Rich are bound *in Justice* to support the Poor, on Account of their having appropriated to their own Use the Whole of the publick Patrimony, and excluded the Poor from the Right of taking any Portion of it, even for the Support of Life; of Course, each Man is obliged to contribute to the Payment of that common Debt, in Proportion to his Allotment of the publick Wealth. But before we begin to tax any Income for the Poor, we must deduct from it as much as is requisite to purchase for the Possessor and his Family, the absolute Necessaries of Life. No Man can be bound to give to another, what is essential to his own Subsistence. To this every Man has that exclusive Right, on which the very Claim of the Poor is founded. But how shall we fix that Sum, which varies in every Country and Season? By the lowest Rate of Wages in each Country, which must
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be supposed a Sum sufficient to maintain the Labourer and his Family; and in this Kingdom cannot justly be thought to exceed it. That being deducted, the Remainder of every Man's Fortune must be accounted taxable to the Poor; as being a Superfluity above what is necessary to the Support of a Human Creature. For though much, or all, of it, may be thought requisite to sustain the Rank of the Possessor; yet no one Man can want Luxury and Splendor as absolutely, as every other doth Rayment, Food, or Medicine: nor, considering the natural Equality of Human Creatures, can any Man have as perfect a Claim to Dignity and Affluence, as every other hath to a Subsistence. Every Man therefore is bound *in Justice* to contribute in such a Proportion to his Superfluity, (that is, the Excess of his Income above the Maintenance of a Labourer) as, if universally followed, would leave no one unsupplied with the Necessaries of Life. Here then is the Measure of each Man's Debt to the Poor, clearly fixed in the Abstract. Whatever he gives beyond that Proportion, in Order to supply the Defect of that Justice in his Neighbour, that Sum, and that only, can be called Charity.

BUT how shall we apply this Abstract Standard to each Man's Income? Here the Difficulty commences, and yet, even here, perhaps is not unfurmountable. The same

Idea closely followed will suggest a Method of calculating this Contribution for landed Property, which constitutes by far the Bulk of the Wealth of this Kingdom, and would be no unreasonable Measure for personal Fortunes*. It is evident then, from the Principles established above, that the Proprietor and the richer Tenants of every Estate are obliged, *in Justice*, to contribute to the Maintenance of the Poor on that Estate, in Proportion to their Income from it beyond a mere Subsistence. For, from the Labour of those Cottagers ariseth the Improvement and Value of the Lands; and whence should the Labourer draw his Support in Time of Age, or Sickness, but from those, in whose Service he hath exhausted his Health and Strength.

IT is obvious, that the amount of this Contribution cannot be fixed in any one Proportion, to the Rent-rolls of Estates differently circumstanced; but the Estimate may be

* For a Merchant, Tradesman, or Manufacturer is as much bound, and for the same Reasons, to support those, whose Labour he employs in his Business, as the Landlord to support his poor Tenant. The Lender of Money on Mortgage, or otherwise, who enjoys a Portion of the Revenues of the Land or Trade of the Borrower, is obliged, in Equity, to take on him the same Proportion of the Burthens attending it. The same may be said of the Proprietor of Stock in the Publick Funds, whose Interest is paid by a Tax from every Man's Fortune.

be made by any Gentleman or his Agent, with half the Trouble now employed in setting Land. However, in Order to illustrate the Principles laid down, and exemplify them in one Instance, the Author hath adjusted such Proportions, as suit those Lands he is best acquainted with; and about which he hath made as accurate Enquiries as possible, in order to lay a Plan for the better Relief of those Poor, whom the Providence of God hath placed more immediately under his Care; and this Calculation may be easily applied, by Parity of Reason, to Estates of different Degrees of Cultivation, Populoufness and Income.

SUPPOSE, out of * thirty Families there be at all Times one incapable of earning a Maintenance, nineteen having only absolute Necessaries, there will remain ten Contributors in various Proportions to the Support of one poor Family. Now, as this Family will very frequently comprize several Individuals, who can earn their own, and even more than their own, Subsistence; or perhaps consist of a Widow, an aged or infirm Person, capable of some little Industry, we may reduce the Relief wanted by each
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* Though there will probably be one in twenty, who occasionally may want Assistance, yet there will not be perhaps, on an Average, more than one in thirty constantly in Pay.

Family to the full Maintenance of a single Pauper: For though more might be wanted in some Instances, less would suffice in others. If then we allow to that Pauper * one Shilling a Week, which will be sufficient, in general, to support Life; and levy that at the Rate of two Thirds on the Landlord, (if his Lands have been lately set) and one Third on his nine richer Tenants, there will lye a Tax of 1l. 14s. 8d. a Year on the former, for the Subsistence of each poor Family on his Estate, where the Leases have been lately renewed. Now it will be a very moderate Allowance to suppose, that a Tract of Land (even in a populous Country) containing thirty Families will pay to the Lord of the Fee 150 l. per Annum, or 5 l. per Family; and, of course, the Tax of 1l. 14s. 8d. a Year for the Pauper in that District, will amount to little

* This Allowance may appear too scanty to some Benevolent Persons, who wish to give to the Poor a *comfortable* Maintenance; and may compare it with the Expence *per Capita* of the Charter Schools, or other charitable Institutions. But they will be pleased to bear in Mind, that this Calculation is not intended to establish a competent Measure for *Charity*. It aims merely to fix every Man's *absolute Debt* to his poor Tenants, what cannot be withheld without Injustice; without rendering him accessory to their Destruction, if they should perish for Want; and perhaps chargeable with the same Guilt, for abandoning them to perish, even though their Lives should be accidentally preserved by the Bounty of their indigent Neighbours, who are not under equal Obligations to relieve them.

little more than One per Cent per Annum of his Rent. As far as the short Experience of the Author, in the Care of an extensive and populous Parish, of little Manufacture, can enable him to judge; a regular Contribution of One per Cent † from every Landlord, would (with the Aid of the Farmer's Bounty in Meal, Potatoes, &c.) make such a Provision for the Poor, as would take off from the landed Gentleman the Imputation of Injustice to his poor Tenants ‡, under which he must at present labour; unless there be some defect in the process of this Argument. Of this, however, the Author, has so little Suspicion, that he is ready to resume his Defence of it against any Objection, advanced with such Candor and Decency as to deserve Attention.

† By fixing a certain Rate per Cent on the Rent-roll, this Tax will lye proportionably light on Lands cheaply set; where, of Course, the richer Tenants, having a greater Share of the Profits of Cultivation, are more able to contribute.

‡ I say, Injustice to his *poor Tenants*, because, however Liberal he may be in his Contributions to the Poor at large, yet if he neglect the Poor on his own Estate, who in some Sort owe their Indigence to him, he still remains their Debtor.

T H E E N D.